An Essay On

Vaccination

Respectfully submitted to the Faculty

of the

Homœopathic Medical College of Penna.

For the Degree of Doctor of Medicine

By

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Philadelphia February 1st.

1861

If, omitting the law "Similia Similibus Curantur", there be any one great discovery in Medical Science which excels all others, that discovery is vaccination. And if there be any one man whose name above all others, Samuel Hahnemann excepted, should be written highest on the Scroll of fame, that man is Edward Jenner the discoverer of vaccination.

And we as homoeopaths should esteem him doubly high, since he has not only given us, in common with other schools, an infallible prophylactic for

that most loathsome, as well as most fatal disease, Small-pox, but has held up to the world in characters as indelible as time, and so plain that he who runs may read, one of the most convincing proofs of our great law of cure. Nor was this the result of a mere happy thought in Jenner, to be received and adopted as soon as conceived, but the result of more than twenty years incessant study and experiment in the face of difficulties which might readily have discouraged and defeated one less enthusiastic than he.

Dr Jenner's attention was first drawn to this subject in the year Seventeen hundred and Seventy five, while practicing innoculation extensively in the county of Gloucestershire England. He found persons who presistently resisted the infection, and ascertained that these persons had previously been infected with a disease contracted from the cow, which was popularly supposed to exempt them from Small pox. Now it occured to Jenner that this disease might be artificially communicated with the same effect, and here be

a possibility of eradicating this scourge of humanity from the face of the earth.

But before making experiments on the human family he went about investigating the disease in the cow; and after thorough research came to the conclusion that the disease was not original in the cow, but contracted through the hands of the grooms, who were also milkers in that country, from a disease known as grease in the heels of the horse. Though I believe Jenner changed his opinions on this subject later in life, and

conceived it to be Small pox
in the cow, and contracted
from the human family.
There is however much in-
teresting argument on both
sides of this subject. I will
give, from good authority, one
instance of the former theory.
A farrier in France, not previously
vaccinated, a few days after
shoeing a horse affected with
grease, was attacked with
sores on his hands exactly
resembling the vaccine
vesicle; and matter taken
from these sores, and intro-
duced into a child produced
the true vaccine disease.

Again on the other side we have had the cow innoculated with the Small pox virus producing all the symptoms of true Cow pox; and having introduced the virus thus procured into the human subject, obtained a disease which was transmitted from individual to individual with all the effects of Cow pox. And this experiment has been repeated over and over with the same effect. Interesting as it might be to dilate upon these theories, time will not permit so we will pass them by without further consideration.

Now to return to the first introduction of vaccination. On the fourteenth day of May Seventeen hundred and ninety-Six this experiment was first performed; and as one writer says was the birthday of vaccination

"On that day matter was taken from the arm of Sarah Nelmis, who had been infected by her masters cows, and inserted by two superficial incisions into the arms of James Phipps a healthy boy of about Eight years old, he went through the disease apparently in a regular and satisfactory manner; but the most agitating part of the

trial still remained to be performed.
It was needful to ascertain whether
he was secure from the contagion
of Small pox. This point so
full of anxiety to Dr Jenner
was fairly put to issue on the
first of the following July. Variolous
matter immediately taken from
a pustule, was carefully inserted
by several incisions, but no disease
followed."

Procuring and Preserving the
Virus. There has been various means
resorted to for this purpose.
Sometimes it is taken from
the vesicle between the fourth and
ninth day, from the fact that
it is supposed to be more efficient

taken at that period, and placed between two plates of glass and allowed to dry. Threads are moistened by drawing them through the vesicle, then dried and preserved in hermetically sealed tubes. Again the virus is directly introduced into fine glass tubes which are closed airtight and it is thus preserved. It has also been collected on the points of quills and lancets and allowed to dry. But the most common method, in this country, as well as the most convenient, is to procure the scab from a matured vaccine vesicle which has gone

through all the stages in a proper manner. And this latter has proved to be quite as efficient as any other.

Method of Introducing.

"When the matter has been prepared by reducing to the consistency of laudable pus with a little water, it may be introduced by making a few incisions just through the cuticle, carrying the virus on the point of the lancet, or as is more commonly the practice perhaps. Make one or more punctures just deep enough to draw a tinge of blood. and in this way introduce the matter. Numerous other ways

have been instituted, but it matters little what one is chosen so that the virus is brought in contact with an abraded surface. The upper portion of the arm is the point generally chosen for the operation, since it is less exposed than some other parts.

Course of the disease. The wound made in introducing, generally heals immediately and no manifest symptoms appear until about the third or fourth day, when the part becomes slightly inflamed. on the fifth day an umbilicated vesicle appears, containing a

viscid, transparent fluid, and continues to increase in size until the eighth day, when it is from one third to one half inch across, of a pearly white color and divided into distinct cells; at the base it is surrounded by a bright red ring which is diffused into an areola between the eighth and tenth day; at about this time constitutional symptoms appear, there is sleight fever, and the apillary glands often become inflamed and painful. The disease is now at its height. On the eleventh day, the stage of decline commences, on the

twelfth the scab has formed over a considerable portion of the vesicle, the areola commences to disappear and continues to decline until about the seventeenth or twenty-first day when the scab falls off.

Susceptibility. There seems to be some persons who are not susceptible to the vaccine disease and who are also exempt from the contagion of small pox; but there is no certainty of these individuals being protected, since we occasionally meet with persons who have been

exposed to the contagion, time after time, without being infected; and finally, perhaps from some slight exposure, are attacked. Others seem totally exempt from the disease in either form.

Protective Power. It was at first supposed that the protective power of vaccination lasted through life, but this, in many cases, does not hold good. After the lapse of eight or ten years there seems to be again a susceptibility to small pox contagion, though often, when contracted after vaccination,

it is in a modified form.
Some writers think there is
a slackening of the protective
power during the period
between the age of 10 and 35
years, and that again after
this period it resumes its
wonted vigor.
Certain it is however, that in-
dividuals are frequently attacked
with genuine Small Pox after
vaccination. thus leading to the
necessity of
Revaccination. And by taking
this precaution any deficiency
in the system may be effectively
supplied. Of this we have abundant
proof in the statistics of Hospitals

and armies where there has scarcely a case occured after revaccination unless the individual had been exposed to small pox before the introduction of the vaccine disease into the system, and then only in a few instances, and these of the mildest character. It would be well therefore if the custom could be introduced. to have each person revaccinated every ten years, or at least as often as small pox occurs epidemically. thus confining this most loathsome disease to a very few cases. and these of the mildest character.